Fundamental texts of the RAF II

the event of "black september" in munich (1972)

a fragment on structure

Camille Akmut [trans.] 2023

Introduction

Engels made fun of the petit bourgeois, who favored, in his formulation, "*revolutionary reminiscences over revolutionary action*". The Rote Armee Fraktion itself had advocated for - what it called - the primacy of action :

In 'A Fragment on structure', this principle is renewed as the moment when "*subjectivity is turned into practice*".

In that document, (whose fragmentary nature makes the impression of having been rushed to paper in urgency - in common with other left over RAF essays, in particular the prison writings), a dense initial argument defends collectivity, realized ultimately through the guerrilla form, as the means of fighting back against the isolating, individualist effects brought on by cities and work life under capitalism.

From that perspective, city guerrilla becomes the answer to urban atomicity, and capitalism has, once more, developed its own contradiction.

In 'The event of "Black September"', the other substantial writing of 1972, the RAF, predictably and consistently, expressed deep solidarity for Palestinians - against a united liberal front of condemnation and indignation.

They praised the direct action for bringing the anti-imperialist struggle from the periphery of the Arabic region to the center of the Western world. Munich, where it could not as easily be ignored.

No bigger sign of admiration and sympathy could have been expressed by them than when they closed that text by saying the Palestinian fighters weighed more than Mountain Tai. [based on an ancient Chinese saying enjoyed by Mao]

City Guerrilla and Class War (1972)

2. The 1971 strike of chemical industry workers

(...)

The chemical industry belongs to the most concentrated industries of West Germany. Profits made by Bayer, Hoechst and BASF represented 50 percent of the whole sector. These three chemical firms are among four largest shareholder companies in the Federal Republic. Of all 597,000 employees of the sector, 200,000 alone work at the big three. (...)

On the cooperation of State and chemical companies, the 1969 'federal research report' holds : "(...) The chemical industry can only keep up its hitherto growth rates and international reputation if (state-funded) fundamental research maintains a high standing."

(...)

While on the whole the West-German industry made 19.3 percent of its profits in foreign countries, in the case of Hoechst it was 44 percent, in the case of BASF 50 percent, and 56 percent for Bayer. Their production sites are located, among others, in South Africa, Portugal, Turkey, Iran and Brazil. To Portugal, Turkey and Iran the Federal Republic simultaneously also gives military funding/help[1]. That this military help has for purpose to secure profit making conditions for capital[2], meaning keeping wages low, and retaliating against (shooting down) workers who fight those conditions is well known. Also known by now is that this military help has been used since the mid-1960s for the expansion of "security forces", i.e. for the police, on the premise that anti-guerrilla war should be treated as fight against criminality; a linguistic understanding thanks to which one could now argue that there was no resistance by the masses, just criminals and criminality - everyone was happy.

(...) Brandt had no "ideological prejudices" when it came to death penalties carried out against revolutionaries but passed as sentences against criminals. Scheel[3] recently expressed the common interest of the Federal Republic and the Brazilian military junta in fighting "terrorism" and "subversive activities"; as a side note, this occurred during the signature of the contract granting the Federal Republic access to the country's Uranium deposits, and meant were the South American guerrilla fighters, who put bombs at BASF's doorstep. The West German chemical industry, together with US-American firms, control nearly the entire chemical and pharmaceutical market in Iran. Iran has the highest growth rates of the Western World; South Africa has the highest profit rates - VW for ex. had dividends of 30 percent on average in the last year, in 1968 even

[1] ["Militaerhilfe"]
[2] ["Kapitalverwertungsbedingungen"]
[3] trans. note Foreign minister at the time.

45 percent. The West German chemical and pharmaceutical industry controls 10 to 12 percent of the South African market (...)

Some statistics : while the number of employees between 1950 and 1970 in the chemical industry rose by 100 per cent, the profits rose by 636 per cent.

3. The property issue and the militarization of the conflict

(...)

We don't say it's easy to conduct guerrilla (...) We mean that the idea of guerrilla, developed by Mao, Fidel, Che, Giap, Marighella, is a good one, that it can no longer be removed from the discussion table (...)

The issue of property/ownership must be made to be the main question of all movements!

A fragment on structure

[4]

What Habermas is developing here has a requirement, of which we say it is the form of proletarization of the class in metropolises : individualization through total alienation of the entire social[ized][5] production.

Individualization is *the* condition for manipulation.

Freedom from this apparatus is only found in its total negation, that is to say in the fight against it as part of a collective, which becomes the guerrilla, it has to become that if it is to become a strategy, hence win.

Collectivity is a moment in the structure of the guerrilla and - subjectivity as condition in everyone to make a decision towards fighting presupposed - its most important, the collective is the group that thinks as a group, feels, acts.[6]

(...)

One of the reasons why the federal attorneys[7] hate Baader the most, is that he really fights with all weapons - that it was through him that we learned that there was no weapon of the bourgeoisie which could not be turned around and used against it: the tactical principle, founded on the concept of process, by which Capital develops its own revolutionary contradiction, and as such Baader is the guerrilla of whom Che said that he was the group.

(...)

For Gramsci, will is an essential condition [conditio sine qua non] : the strong will, the motor of the revolutionary process, through which subjectivity is turned into practice.

[4] [trans. note] undated, 1976 at the latest, author Ulrike Meinhof?

[5] ["vergesellschafteten"]

[6] trans. note the argument developped here is in direct opposition of other revolutionary theories not in the Marxist tradition, in particular it recalls the concept of "oversocialization" (advocating for individualism instead, as a means of preservation of one's authentic nature - notably while the critic of city life remains preserved) as developed both, in the theory and practice of Ted Kacinzski.

[7] trans. note BAW, abbrv. for Bundesanwaltschaft.

Actions of the "Black September" in Munich. On anti-imperialist strategy (1972)

Proletarian revolutions ... constantly offer a critique of themselves, are interrupted regularly in their unfolding, undo what had seemingly already been accomplished, only to start again from new, have a thorough horror of the half-dones, weaknesses and meagerness of their first attempts, seem to vanquish their enemy, just for them to come back from the earth with new strengths and reappear standing before them many times stronger, continuously face new fears as to the unbearable that must be done and which is uncertain, until finally the conditions are created from which there is no return and the circumstances themselves call : hic Rhodus, hic salta.

(Karl Marx)[1]

"The stone, which they keep, will fall on their own feet."

The actions of "Black September"[2] in Munich have uncovered the nature[3] of imperial domination and the anti-imperialist fight, making them understandable and transparent, like no other revolutionary action in West Germany and West Berlin before.[4] At once anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and internationalist. Displaying a sensibility for historical and political relationships which only the people can have - those who are exploited, freed from complicity with the system and have no reason to believe or acknowledge the masks worn by exploiters, to venerate the history of their exploiters, or give credibility to their views. Courage and strength were displayed, which the revolutionaries could only draw from their deep love[5] for the Palestinian folk, as well as a class consciousness in which is expressed the knowledge of its historical mission, that to be an avant garde — a humanity, characterized by full awareness of being engaged in a fight against a system of domination, the last one in the system of class domination, both the bloodiest and cunning to be : in its being and tendency, through and through, a fascist imperialism – no matter which character mask it may choose to put on to best represent itself : Nixon and Brandt, Moshe Dayan or Genscher, Golda Meir or [George] McGovern.

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[1] trans. note The location of the quote, not provided, is from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* [Collected Works vol. 11, p. 117]. The RAF rarely gave indications for Marx quotes, because it assumed readers had a good knowledge of Marx-Engels? (in this case the quote is at the beginning of the aforementioned text, among Marx's better known).

[2] trans. note "Black September" may refer to multiple things : name of the group involved in the 1972 Summer Olympics hostage taking and 1970 Jordan conflict, which gave rise to that same organization (a connection which the RAF highlights later on).

[3] ["Wesen"]

[4] trans. note The RAF at that point had already conducted major acts of revolution themselves : including bombings of the US Army headquarters in Frankfurt and Heidelberg (May 1972). (Hence coming from them, it be can't overstated how big of an homage this is.)

[5] ["Verbundenheit"]

(...) The strategy of "Black September" is the revolutionary strategy of the anti-imperialist fight in the Third World and in the metropolises under the conditions of an expanded[6] imperialism of the multinationals.

I. Imperialism

Anti-imperialist fight

The event was anti-imperialist.

The comrades of the Black September had their own black September in 1970 - when the Jordan Army massacred over 20.000 Palestinians - and brought it right back to where it all started : West Germany - previously Nazi Germany - now an imperialist center.

(...)

Vietnam

Was Vietnam a joke? Guatemala, Santo Domingo, Indonesia, Angola?

Vietnam is the horrific experience made by people of the third world that imperialism is resolved to commit genocide against them, once nothing can be pressed out of them anymore - when they refuse to serve as market, military station, provider of raw materials, delivery of cheap work force any longer.

(...)

Imperialist center

"Black September" brought its war from the Arabic periphery of imperialism to the center. Center means : the center (headquarters) of multinational companies (...)

Multinational companies

The multinational companies have access to everything that the countries - from which imperialism has robbed all possibility for development - are missing, and uses it against them. (...)

Weapons (war tools)

Its weapons are : capital potential, technology, communication means, the information system[7], means of transport. To conquer it has strategies called : investments, profit transfers, information politics, (...)

[6] ["entfalteten"]
[7] ["Informationswesen"]

Original texts

Die Aktion des "Schwarzen September" in Munchen. 1972.
Fragment uber Struktur.

References

- Marx. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.* 1852.